GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:5848
ANSWERED ON:08.09.2011
SHORTAGE OF LIFE SAVING DRUGS
Biju Shri P. K.

Will the Minister of CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the life saving drugs are being sold at high prices due to shortage in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof alongwith the reasons therefor;

(c) whether the Government receives any information regarding the stock of life saving drugs from time to time;

(d) if so, the details thereof alongwith the estimated stock of drugs in the country;and

(e) the steps being taken by the Government for the research of new life saving drugs and the amount likely to be spent on the research of these drugs during the Eleventh Five Year Plan period?

Answer

MINISTER OF THE STATE (INDEPENDENT CHARGE) IN THE MINISTRY OF STATISTICS AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION AND MINISTER OF THE STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI SRIKANT KUMAR JENA)

(a) & (b): The National Pharmaceuticals Pricing Authority (NPPA) fixes / revises the prices of scheduled medicines as per provisions of Drugs (Prices Control) Order, 1995 (DPCO, 1995). Under the provisions of DPCO, 1995, no person can sell any scheduled formulation (medicine) to a consumer at a price exceeding the price notified / approved by the NPPA. In case, a company is found selling at prices higher than the price notified/ approved by the NPPA/ Government, action is taken against them as per the provisions of the DPCO, 1995.

The price fixation / revision is a continuous process under the DPCO, 1995. The details of the prices fixed/ revised during last two years and the current year are given below:

	2009-10		2010-11		2011-12 {upto 31.7.2011)	
	Nos.	%age	Nos.	%age	Nos.	%age
Price Increased	184	10.08	223	31.28	95	34.80
Price Decreased	450	24.67	60	8.42	30	10.99
Price fixed for the first time	1155	63.33	371	52.03	114	41.76
No change in prices	35	1.92	59	8.27	34	12.45

Total 1824 100 713 100 273 100

Includes Pro-rata prices fixed

It is evident from the details mentioned above, that during the current financial year 2011-12 (up to 31st July, 2011), the prices of 273 scheduled medicine packs have been fixed / revised by the NPPA, out of which only in 95 cases the prices were increased which comprises 34.80% of the total cases for which prices were fixed / revised during the year. In the remaining cases, prices were either reduced or fixed for the first time or there was no change in the price.

Further, NPPA monitors the availability of drugs through monthly field reports from the State Drugs Controller and other available information and identity shortage, if any, and take remedial steps to make the drugs available. As and when the reports for shortage of particular drug(s), in any part of the country are received, the concerned company is asked to rush the stock and to make the drugs available. Generally shortage reported is brand specific. However, in most cases alternative brands are available.

(c): No, Sir.

(d): Does not arise in view of the reply to part (c) of the question as above.

(e): The Department of Science and Technology (DST) has been implementing a Plan Scheme (Drugs & Pharmaceuticals Research Programme - DPRP) since 1994-95 for promoting collaborative R&D in Drugs & Pharmaceutical Sector. Under this programme so far 103 industries - institutional alliances both in modern and Indian System of Medicine including veterinary drugs have been funded. The programme has supported R&D projects on various life saving drugs.

44 state of the art infrastructure facilities for pharmaceutical R&D have been created in different premier institutions and universities on Bio-availability, pharmacoinformatics, regulatory toxicology, safety pharmacology at NIPER, Mohali, pharmacokinetic and metabolic studies, regulatory pharmacology and toxicology, medium throughput screening at CDRI, Lucknow. Transgenic and gene knockout Mice, clinical research facility, stem cells technologies and regenerative medicine, Biosafety level 4 laboratory at CCMB, Hyderabad, Bioequivalence, pharmacovigiiiance, new chemical entities, development, animal facilities for Indian System of Medicine etc have been created in other universities and institutions.

DST has given loans and Grant-in-aid amounting to Rs.192.50 crores and Rs. 145.50 crores respectively for the projects during the last 4 years from 2007-08 to .,.2009-10. As per Total Budget Estimates for the current financial year, an amount of Rs. 60 crores has been provided for.

As informed by the Department of Biotechnology projects are being supported on drugs/vaccines/generics under the Biotechnology Industry Partnership Programme (BIPP) scheme. This is a Public Private Partnership Programme where in the industries are involved in innovative, high risk, R&D and Clinical Trials for product validation. This is done either independently by the company or in collaboration with the Public Sector Partners. The approximate committed contribution by DBT in the Eleventh Five Year Plan for the above projects is Rs. 200 crores.

As informed by the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) it has focused on development of streptokinase which is an effective and inexpensive clot dissolving drug used in the treatment of myocardial infarction and pulmonary embolism. The constituent laboratory of CSIR has developed the technology for synthenis of Recombinant Streptokinase. In collaboration with an industry it was launched in the market in 2009. These products are available in Indian market. Institute has also lincensed an improved, new clot-specific thrombolytic for further development to an industry.

The amount spent by the Department of Pharmaceuticals so far on the research of drugs for most neglected diseases during the 11th Five Year Plan through National Institute of Pharmaceutical Education and Research (NiPER) is Rs. 472.17 lakhs.